

Up to this time the books that had come under my notice—the oldest so far as local history was concerned—was Withers' *Border Warfare* published in 1831.\* *Howe's Virginia* was published in 1845. I have always been inclined to give Withers the highest place for the reason that he was a mature man when he was writing and must have talked to many of the Revolutionary Soldiers and Indian fighters.

My attention has recently been called to a volume of 392 pages, printed in 1826, entitled, "Sketches of History, Life, and Manners in the United States," by a Traveler.† It bears no name of author or publisher, but it appears to have been printed in New Haven.

The first hundred pages of the book contain an account of a trip from Huntsville, Alabama, to Alexandria, D. C., in the course of which he passed through West Virginia.

I could not tell who wrote the book. It is highly offensive to the people among whom he visited, and who let him escape unscathed. This unlovely trait has been fully developed in the traveling provincial who speaks as an authority concerning the country he passed through casually. It is an exceedingly bad tempered book. That part of the volume devoted to this section is headed "West Virginia" as though the States had already been divided.

It is apparent that the author of that book was a man of mature years for he speaks of having lived in Staunton in 1787, and having been old enough to take interest in history at that time.

It was on this trip as an old man that he saw his first oyster. In Kanawha county, he saw the Burning Springs and wonders that air should burn. He knew nothing of natural gas—not even the term. Turn a provincial loose for the first time, even though that provincial has been confined to the corporate limits of a city as big as New York, and he is apt to disapprove of all the manners, customs, morals, and styles that do not measure up to the standards set by the snub-nose vogues of his own home town.

It is an awkward term to refer continually to him as the author of the book, so the party will hereinafter be designated by the appropriate name of Ananias.

Ananias was the first to blackguard West Virginia. He started the favorite indoor sport of reviling the mountain man.

Ananias was feeble, and he had been told that there was balm in West Virginia in the form of mineral springs and he journeys thither.

He comes into Virginia by way of Washington county, Virginia, and he spits venom in the opening lines. He notes three things peculiar to the proud State that he is to visit. They are: bastards, fleas and the soft accent.

\*The first book published in western Virginia relating to the  
†Notes on the Settlement and Trade of the

As to the natural children, that was none of his business. The soft accent that he admired is their own. As to the fleas that took to him, if he had been better versed in science, he would not have given away the loathsome secret that he was parent to these parasites, for while some persons cannot help attracting fleas, it is the last thing that they should admit. And it is no cause of boasting. As Ananias naively admits that he was infested with fleas, and made history of the fact, we will pass it along for what it is worth. Now do not get your back up if you are flea bitten, for I have known many fine people to be bitten by fleas. Ananias tells of another flea parent he met at a tavern. They had something in common. This other was a Frenchman, and his method of hunting fleas was to pretend to fall asleep. Then the fleas thinking it safe would bite and the sleeper would slap.

It is not very plain which one of the numerous watering places in Monroe Ananias honored with his presence, but he went to the county-seat, and calls it "a poor little village."

Speaking of this section generally, he says:

"This bleak, inhospitable, and dreary country, remote from commerce and navigation, destitute of arts, taste, and refinement, derives great advantage from these Springs. Thousands of dollars are left here annually by those wealthy visitors, and in the meantime, as they are mostly people of taste and refinement, they bring a fund of amusement and instruction home to the doors of its inhabitants."

True then as now. Also some rare specimens of hobnailed livers. Also some whose only mission is to syphilize the country.

Not getting much better of his ailments at the Springs, Ananias left for the west. He passed through the Savannahs of Greenbrier county. After crossing Greenbrier River he observed the Savannahs. I find here corroboration of the theory that I advanced some years ago that in and about Lewisburg there were no forests. He says that there were no trees on the Savannahs but that they were covered with luxurious grass and a small shrub which sheltered the grass and protected it from the drying heat of the summer and the freezing cold in the winter.

The Savannahs disappeared by the time Sewell mountain was reached. He records Sewell's experience at Marlinton but says his campmate was Carver, instead of Marlin.

He notes, too, the absence of forests on the mountains which coincides with the tradition that the Indians kept the country burned off and that most of our fine West Virginia timber grew after the expulsion of the Indians.

He arrived at the Burning Springs of Kanawha county and found them burning. There were seven vents each about the size of the little finger—round holes as though bored with a spike gimlet.

One was not burning and from that one he noticed that the air that issued had a nauseous smell, somewhat like the wipings of a foul gun, but much more unsufferable. Boatmen used the flames to boil meat for their camps. The flame was about two feet high and would burn for months if not extinguished by rain. He called it "burning air." "It is the

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air that burns," he says. "No opinion has been expressed respecting this phenomenon or any pains taken to ascertain the nature or cause of its existence."

It is apparent that he had no conception of that great element known as natural gas which has brought so much wealth to West Virginia.

The salt works that had first been operated by the Indians were in full blast, Col. David Ruffner having established them. He records the fact that the Kanawha salt is very much stronger than other salt on the market, and that in Alabama he had observed that bacon cured with Kanawha salt kept well, while that in which other salt had been used did not keep at all.

He says that owing to the fact that the canal was about to be built along this river that he had been at pains to pick up everything concerning it.

He talked with soldiers who had fought at the battle of the Point fifty years before.

Among others he talked with Ann Bailey, who carried gunpowder to the army at the Point, or Fort Randolph. He found her very poor, almost naked. She begged for a dram which Ananias gave to her.

Charleston was a town of four stores, two taverns, a court-house, a jail, an academy, a postoffice, and a printing press.

Lewisburg is recorded as having a handsome stone courthouse and jail, two clerks offices, two churches, one for Presbyterians, (which is still standing) one for Methodist, one academy for young men, one for young women, two taverns, four retail stores, a post office, a printing office, and forty dwellings.

The town of Lewisburg is described as being more important than Charleston. He refers to Rev. Dr. McElhenny as the principal of an academy for women, the only one in the republic.

He said that at preaching he counted one hundred men, and that they were all but one clothed in foreign cloth. The one exception was Hon. William Smith, member of Congress, who wore domestic cloth.

He thinks that the visitors at the springs have been the cause of the styles in Lewisburg, and they are still struggling with that problem down there.

Ananias criticises the accent, the manners, and the homes of the Greenbrier people. And thus:

"Indeed, West Virginia has dealt out genius with a sparing hand; with the exception of John Breckenridge. I am told she has never produced one man that might be called great."

He has some valuable details about the Clendenin massacre, and it was through a talk with Mrs. Mays, a daughter of Mrs. Clendenin, that they were obtained.

Mrs. Clendenin was captured and the Indians went by Muddy Creek to Keeney's Knobs, and found that Yokum on Muddy Creek, and Cea (See) on Keeney's Knob had been killed. They left some women prisoners in camp with one old Indian to guard them, and the party went east and returned after three days, with a large number of horses, and on every horse was a bell. These Indians (Shawnees) had in the meantime per-

petrated the second Kerr's Creek massacre. The Indians immediately set out for their towns but before they were off of Keeney's Knobs, Mrs. Clendenin had made her escape. She went home and found the dead body of her husband. From there she walked by night and in nine days arrived in Dickinson's on the Cowpasture river, with nothing to eat.

Ananias here relates an incident which must be rejected as impossible and untrue.

He says that on Howards Creek, within two miles of her home, she met some white men, one her brother-in-law, who gave her no assistance.

Of the family the only survivors were Mrs. Clendenin and one daughter who was afterwards reclaimed from the Indians. She married a Mr. Davis, and had several children, one of whom was the mother of Ballard Smith, once a member of Congress.

Mrs. Clendenin after her return to Augusta county married a Mr. Rogers and by him had two children, Mrs. Mays and a son. Mrs. Rogers died in 1817.

At Lewisburg, the traveler met and talked with the widow of Capt. Mathew Arbuckle. She was in her seventieth year, and was married a second time to a Mr. Welsh.

He records that the earliest settlement at Lewisburg was in the year 1775, when Col. John Stuart and George Mathews, of Augusta county opened a store on this Savannah.

Mrs. Welsh was living at that time near the site of the town of Lewisburg. During the Revolution and before, a fort stood at Lewisburg called Fort Savannah, and this fort was located where the house and garden of Mrs. Welsh stood in the year 1824.

Fort Donnally stood eight miles north-east of Fort Savannah. Col. Samuel Lewis relieved the fort when attacked.

In 1810, in Greenbrier, a frost occurred in August that wholly destroyed vegetation and nearly caused a famine. We have heard of that frost ever since.

Ananias relates that Indian corn does not succeed well, but buckwheat is reared in great quantities.

It appears that the shrub that Ananias speaks of as growing on the Savannahs, the only thing except grass, and which he calls "pipe-stem," is somewhat of a mystery.

"This pipestem is a curiosity; it grows to the height of from three to four feet, straight as an arrow, of equal size from top to bottom, and perfectly free from branch or protuberance. It is without leaves, except small tufts, resembling grass, at the extremity on innumerable slender branches which terminate the top. This pipe stem is hollow, like a reed and about the same size. They are used for pipe stems for which it answers equal to the reed, and from which it took its name."

Ananias describes the people as being ignorant, rude, dirty, prying, and at the same time as possessing the only academy for women in the republic. He then says they are remarkable for their good morals and inoffensive manners and for their freedom from crime. Their ladies are very domestic. And the men are very accommodating, and refuse tips and gratuities.

He says that wild horses in 1763 were on these Savannahs in immense numbers.

If the sesqui-centennial is held at Lewisburg next year as scheduled, this book of the prophet Ananias will be invaluable for the greatest liars are also the greatest truth tellers for the reason they talk so much that their output of truth is greater than that of silent persons. For instance there are more Democrats in Pennsylvania than there are in Virginia.

Ananias is the only writer of the pioneer days who took the trouble to speak of the mannerisms of this ancient civilization.

He found it queer that for "pretending" they said "letting on." For "not a thing," "not a hate." For "get out of the way," they say "get out the road." For "chair," they say "cheer."

"From Montgomery to Harrison" he says, "there has never been reared one man of abilities of any sorts." I take it, by this he means the country lying in the rich valleys of the Cheat, Greenbrier, and Bluestone, bordering the divide between the eastern and western waters. And he goes on to say, "Kanawha, inferior as it may be, has produced one of the brightest stars of American genius, Henry Ruffner, LL. D., a man of profound erudition who would do honor to any country."

Statements like the foregoing are in keeping with the remarks on page 30, where he says, very little limestone is seen west of the Allegheny mountain. As a matter of fact the Big Lime is all west of the Allegheny Mountain. He suffered from a beam in the eye.

The wild animals he noted were bears, wolves, deer, panthers, wild-cats, raccoons, foxes, ground hogs, opossums, rabbits, squirrels, white and striped ground squirrels, fairy-diddles, and the skunk. "All of which are numerous in the mountains and will ever continue the proprietors of those immense wilds."

In the Elysian fields from whence Ananias looks down upon those wilds he has a better knowledge of what is meant by the word "forever".

Ananias reveres the summer boarders. He objects to the citizens of Greenbrier and adjoining counties wearing fine clothes like they do. "It never comes into their heads that those people, whose exterior they so sedulously imitate, are from the seats of refinement, and highly polished manners, that they are people of education, information, and reflection. Such eternally is the effect of ignorance."

He would reject the finding of a wise man to the effect that Judy O'Grady, and the Colonel's Lady, are sisters under the skin.

He divides us up into two classes, "Visitors and yeomanry." When in yeomanry we should do as yeomans do, and not as the visitors.

The visitors still come, and barring a disposition to drink champagne in the days of campagne before breakfast, I never saw much difference, in the idle rich and the idle poor.

He notes the fact that many of the mountain people live to be old and then die suddenly, falling in their tracks, so to speak. Sudden deaths are confined to old people, he says, and he thinks it is due to the climate. He would like to hear the opinion of the learned on the subject.

Here is the opinion from the unlearned. It is due to the fact that



mountain people are great athletes, climbing mountains and putting forth strenuous efforts. The result is health, happiness, and long life, together with a dilated heart, which breaks, and grants the greatest boon of all, a speedy and unexpected exit from the world.

Ananias was in Pocahontas County but does not record anything peculiar to this county, probably because we were without the zone of influence of the "Summer Visiter," as he spells it. So we were allowed to remain unspotted from the world. On his return from Kanawha county, he came by the way of Nicholas and Pocahontas.

He groups six counties together as being on the bosom of a vast mass of mountains, Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas, Nicholas, Giles, and Tazewell, with Greenbrier as the "mother" of the whole.

He records that the mountain people were kind and hospitable, and then ridicules the home he visited, the food, the table manners, the home made ornaments on the walls, the china, the linen, and the family life. Local philosophers long ago disposed of such sports, or breaks of nature, by saying that if we can stand such a life all the time, he ought to be able to stand it a part of the time.

Probably Ananias reached his highest flight of oratory when he penned the following: "The country is so full of mountains that they are offensive to the sight."

He praises Callahan's Tavern, the celebrated stand. He has known the Callahans since 1787. The old man then dead, had been diminutive in size, but his two sons who run the tavern are stout, well looking men, and he is not only surprised but astonished to find them so genteel. Oh, Ananighass!

Staunton consisted of two court houses, one prison, two clerk's offices, a fire office, one printing office, one post office, three churches one for Episcopalians, one for Methodists, and one for Presbyterians. There are no public squares in Staunton; the public buildings are on the streets. Staunton contains two hundred and forty dwelling houses, ten stores, three doctors, and thirteen lawyers. It was an incorporated town without watch or patrol. Formerly it drew all the trade west of it but the merchants such as Beirne and Caperton, of Monroe, had begun to take the trade away from it.

During the Revolution, the legislature of Virginia was forced back from the tide water into the mountains, and sat in Staunton. Ananias talked with Mrs. William Lewis, who lived in Staunton at that time.

She said that word was received by the legislature that Tarleton with a British force would arrive in Staunton the next day, arriving by Rockfish Gap.

The Staunton and Augusta men formed a large, irregular company to block the pass through the Gap, but nearly all of the members of the legislature got their horses and fled to the west, leaving the streets strewn with parcels dropped in their flight. Tarleton was stayed and did not cross the Blue Ridge.

In this short review of the ancient volume I have been aggravated and interested. Ananias lived among us at the time when he must have

known such men as Gen. Andrew Lewis, and the heroes of the Revolution. He has not put down very much but he is the Original Detractor of West Virginia.

West Virginians are proud people. They do and dare and have always loomed large in the history of their country. They are mountain men. Such men as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln have considered them to be the salt of the earth, and the pivot on which the destiny of the nation turned.

But never have we been able to furnish the right kind of tinsel for the provincial abroad.

Our solecisms are too many and too glaring. We have never been able to satisfy the class who consider that the necessities of social intercourse arbitrarily fixed are more important than the fundamental virtues. We have never been able to live with those who despise the ancient sacrifice of an humble and a contrite heart.

And I sometimes think that when we are inclined to get puffed up and proud, that the Lord sends a social hermaphrodite to write us up, and tell the world of the rude and uncouth men who go shouting through the woods.

## CHAPTER IV

*A Study of Youth and Jackson Mills. The Summer Haven of the Boys and Girls.*

Jackson Mills is in Lewis County, one hundred and eighteen miles from Marlinton, five miles from Weston, and nineteen miles from Clarksburg. It is on the West Fork of the Monongahela River. The mill itself is of the grist variety and seems to be a well built frame building on an ancient rock foundation. A trolley line runs along one side of the river and the passenger looks across upon an hundred acres of sod fringed by the fine trees. On the sod there are a number of buildings of the country club style of architecture. The land is owned by the State, and many of the counties are putting up houses for their boys and girls. These houses range from cabin size to very pretentious habitations but all are neat and well built. Webster county's log cabin is the gem of the collection and Harrison county is building one as big as a hotel.

Jackson Mills was once the home of Stoenwall Jackson. It was here that he spent his boyhood. He lives everywhere in the hearts of his countrymen but nowhere are the precious memories of his boyhood so well preserved as they are upon this historic spot. For instance here is the tree that young Thomas climbed to shake out a raccoon one night to the eager dogs below.

This is the State Camp for boys and girls and it is ruled over by a burly monarch, Prof. W. H. Kendrick, director and dictator, of the velvet glove and the iron hand.

I had had a very hazy idea of the scope and purpose of the work there. But I know now the voice of the camp. It is that it is fashionable to be good.